



POLICY

Adopted: 25/11/2014
Minute No: 306
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Minute No:

FILE NO: A2004-0654/042
TITLE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

BACKGROUND

Local Economic Development involves the implementation of a range of activities with the goal of building up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. Central to this concept is communities continually improving their investment climate and business enabling environment to enhance their competitiveness, create and retain jobs and improve incomes in the local area.

Local economic development is heavily influenced and shaped by the economic path that has led to an area's current economic position and characteristics. For Port Stephens this has resulted in a local economy that is clearly defined from a sectorial (manufacturing, government, defence and tourism), and locational perspective, with a strong sense of local initiative and development that takes advantage of the natural and locational assets of the LGA.

Council recognises that it is the private sector that remains the most significant contributor to local economic development via the development of business. Council's overarching role is to provide the appropriate environment to enable sustainable economic development by influencing the private sector's motivation to grow and generate profits – which can then create local economic development and employment opportunities.

The first Port Stephens Economic Development Strategy was launched in 2007 as the guiding document to shape the economic future of the area. The strategy set out a clear vision for the future of Port Stephens.

An Economic Development Unit (EDU) was created to deliver the strategy, with an Economic Development Advisory Panel (EDAP) also being assembled to ensure local business/community input was provided on local economic development issues.

Council recognises the valuable role local businesses plays in contributing to a sustainable region and has placed a high priority on proactive policies and actions to improve investment, employment and business performance across Port Stephens.

Typically local Government in Australia has focussed externally on local business support from an economic development team as their primary activity in the delivery of economic development services. This approach only partially captures a local government's responsibilities and potential to positively impact local economic development. This policy has Port Stephens Council moving to an internally-biased approach to economic development that identifies all services across Council that have a direct impact on local economic development.

OBJECTIVE

This Policy establishes a whole of council approach to the delivery of services that enhance Council's contribution to local economic development in the local government area (LGA) in an effort to create local employment opportunities and improve incomes in the local area.

There are 8 key service areas that have a direct economic development impact:

- 1) Civic Leadership and Governance;
- 2) Organisational Financial Sustainability;
- 3) Economic Development Program;
- 4) Land Use Planning;
- 5) Capital Works Delivery;
- 6) Development Planning;
- 7) Tourism and Events;
- 8) Property Development.

PRINCIPLES

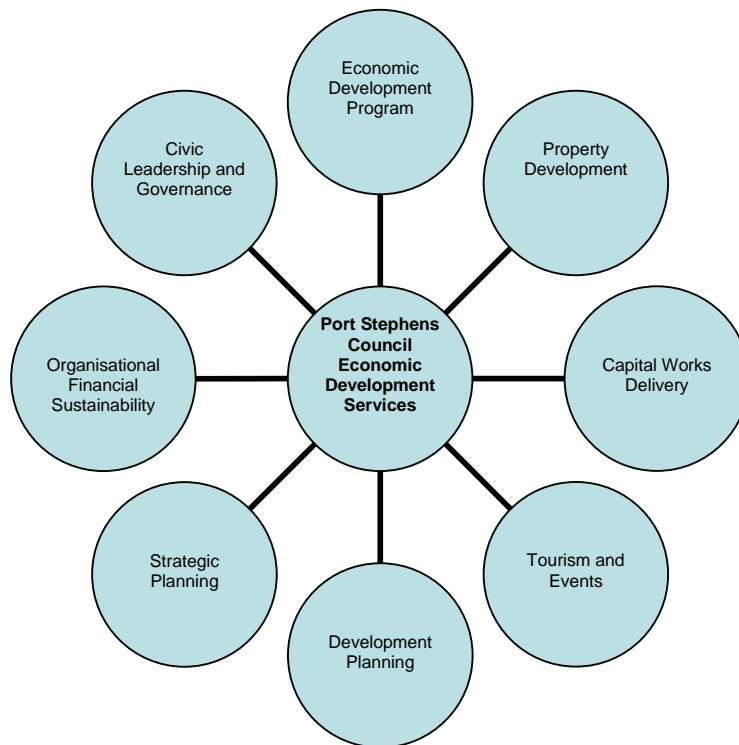
Port Stephens Council is committed to the following service-delivery principles regarding local economic development:

- 1) Civic Leadership and Governance – Council will have an Economic Development Policy that acknowledges a whole-of-council approach to local economic development and will use the business levy to foster economic development initiatives throughout the community.
- 2) Organisational Financial Sustainability – We will deliver an ongoing business improvement program to ensure a sustainable financial position that will provide us with the best ability to impact on local economic development through reinvestment in our community.
- 3) Economic Development Program – The EDU will manage local economic information, data, analysis and advice, local networking and learning opportunities, small business development and major industry support. The EDU will also take the lead in facilitating collaboration with other levels of government, regional organisations and local and regional business associations to facilitate and attract investment in the LGA.
- 4) Land Use Planning – Council's strategic land use planning will be informed by the latest data and trends and deliver plans to maintain staged growth and

development in the LGA. Where appropriate, specific controls will be incorporated into the strategic land use planning framework to encourage and facilitate local economic development. This will include a defined implementation schedule and process for measuring success.

- 5) Development Planning – Council will take a lead position by providing a positive business development environment, and we will manage our development assessment process via a focus on responsive customer service and efficient decision making.
- 6) Capital Works Delivery – Council acknowledges the role of infrastructure (roads, open space, sport and recreation/ leisure, community facilities, flood and drainage) in underpinning local economic development. Our financial sustainability principle will allow funds to be released for planned infrastructure works.
- 7) Tourism and Events – We will run the Port Stephens Visitor Centre and licence and sponsor events to capture visitor spend and further investment in our local community. We will strategically and financially support Destination Port Stephens to deliver the LGAs Destination Management Plan.
- 8) Property Development – As a significant property manager in the LGA, Council will undertake property development activities as a way to activate and contribute to local economic development in localities within Port Stephens.

Figure 1: Local Economic Development Services, Port Stephens Council



POLICY STATEMENT

Council has an all-of-organisation approach to economic development and will monitor and measure performance against the 8 identified service delivery areas and principles. The monitoring and measuring will be in relation to specific metrics designed to measure the effectiveness of Council's service delivery to provide a tangible measure of Council's impact on local economic development.

RELATED POLICIES

National, State and Regional Policy Context

NSW 2021
NSW 2021 Hunter Regional Action Plan
Regional Development Australia
Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2011-2018
NSW Economic Development Framework
State Infrastructure Strategy
New Planning System
Visitor Economy Action Plan
Regional Industries Investment Fund
Lower Hunter Regional Strategy
Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan

Local Policy Context

Futures Strategy
Integrated Strategic Plans
Asset Management Plan
Port Stephens Planning Strategy 2011
DAREZ Business Park
Commercial and Industrial Land Strategy 2008
Town Centre Strategic Plans

- Nelson Bay
- Anna Bay
- Medowie
- Karuah

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economists often define sustainability as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The whole of Council approach to the delivery of services which advance local economic development will ensure an overarching role that provides the appropriate environment to enable sustainable economic development.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Economic development can have positive social implications through promoting inclusive growth as investment occurs in the community. Economic development

can generate strong social outcomes on the standard-of-living of local residents. Primarily, positive economic development can lead to increased job growth and opportunities for the local resident workforce encouraging a strong sense of purpose and local participation in the community.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The Port Stephens Economic Development Policy aligns with the long term Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan 2014-2024, within the Community Plan are five community goals, including Community Goal 4 'Our Economy' that states "Port Stephens has a sustainable and diversified economy". This Policy focuses on a whole of Council economic development approach to achieve this community goal.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Council has a role to play in providing quality local infrastructure and stewardship of natural assets as part of Council's vision of a treasured environment. Access to reliable and high quality infrastructure along with a well-managed environment drives business growth and influences decisions about business locations.

RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

Broadly, NSW local councils have responsibilities under a wide range of state and commonwealth legislation and, while, there is no specific legislative provision that mandates the delivery of economic development services, Port Stephens Council has a business-rate-levy in place that is reported on annually.

Specific relevant legislation includes:

- Local Government Act 1993;
- Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

Economic Development Manager.

PROCESS OWNER

Economic Development Manager.

REVIEW DATE

December 2016